

Etonian Faces

SIR.—The reference by Atticus last week to the "long, sensitive, Etonian faces" shared by Lieut.-General Gerald Lathbury and Sir Evelyn Baring prompts some interesting questions.

Do boys with long and sensitive faces tend to go to Eton? Or—since many boys' names must be entered for the school before the shape of their faces has taken a decided turn one way or another—do the authorities traditionally discriminate, under the guise of entrance examinations selecting from the random-featured candidates only the suitably qualified?

This would explain why a hapless round-head like the late Prime Minister had to go elsewhere for his education. In the case of the few blatant brachycephalics admitted, like Mr. Cyril Connolly and Mr. John Lehmann, one supposes that extra sensitivity was considered to make up for lack of length.

Atticus is presumably aware of the close-lying ears at Marlborough (assisted by the strong downland winds—a perfect example of the interplay of geography and culture) and of the thoughtful, receding hairline which Winchester produces with the aid of a special diet. Less obvious are the typically stolid flared nostrils, the bushy pessimistic Reptonian eyebrows and the dimple which comes so readily to the cheek of the Oundle man.

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[Atticus writes: "During my frequent visits to Eton I have noticed (a) that many Etonians have long faces and (b) that many Etonians are the sons of Old Etonians. This curious coincidence might be taken by some as evidence that environment affects heredity—in this case a sublimation of the venerable Etonian habit of keeping one's mouth open for long periods.

Soviet Academician Trofim Lyсенko is the main proponent of this theory; and although the bulk of his work has been done on wheat and tomatoes, there seems to be no obvious reason why his theory should not apply to schoolboys.]